

LIVING IN TEMPE ARIZONA: CITIZEN EVALUATIONS

2000

Prepared for:

The City of Tempe, Arizona

Prepared by:

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METHODOLOGY:

The information in this report is based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 600 adult heads of household living in the city limits of Tempe, Arizona. Five callbacks were used after which random substitution was allowed. Sixty-five percent of the original sample was interviewed.

The data were weighted to match the demographics of the 1998 citizens satisfaction survey. The weighting is done so that changes in citizen satisfaction can be attributed to changes in public perception rather than differences in the samples.

The sampling error for the survey when the proportion giving a response of 50% and assuming the 95% level of significance is plus or minus 4.0%. Sampling errors for answers more or less than 50% will be less than 4%.

The interviews were conducted by professional interviewers during the last week of October, 2000. The interview schedule was designed and pre-tested by Dr. Bruce D. Merrill, Professor of Mass Communication and Director of the Media Research Program in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunication at Arizona State University. Dr. Merrill conducted the survey as a private consultant.

Survey Overview

Residents like living in Tempe.

Ninety-seven percent (97%) say they are either very (72%) or generally (25%) satisfied with the quality of life they experience. Ninety-five percent (95%) are very (52%) or generally (43%) satisfied with the services provided by the City. Eighty-percent are satisfied with the way their tax dollars are being spent. These ratings are almost identical to those received two years ago.

Services provided by the City are highly rated.

When residents who used various City services were asked to rate them, almost all of the services were rated highly. The lowest ratings were in regards to local bus service, 75% positive, and counseling and job placement services 86% positive. The rating for counseling services was about the same as two years ago. The ratings for the bus service improved from 62% positive in 1998 to 75% in 2000

Traffic and keeping control of growth are the two areas residents are most concerned about.

Residents were given the opportunity to express to the Council, in an open-ended question, the problems that most concerned them. The two most frequently mentioned problems were (1) doing something about traffic (21%) and (2) having tighter controls on growth (11%). Providing more police officers (8%) and improving Tempe schools (8%) were also areas residents were concerned about.

Two changes from 1998 are particularly evident. The number of comments regarding doing something about crime and violence declined from 16% in 1998 to 8% in the current survey. The number of comments about Rio Salado, both positive and negative, increased since the 1998 survey.

People feel much safer in their neighborhoods and in downtown Tempe.

The biggest change in citizen evaluations in 1998 and 2000 was the increase in the number of people who feel safer walking around their neighborhoods or walking in the downtown area. The percentage of people who feel safe walking in their neighborhoods at night has improved from 68% in 1997 and 1998 to 88% in 2000. The percentage of people who felt safe walking in the downtown area in 1997 was 63%. In the 2000 survey, 82% felt safe in the downtown area at night.

There is a significant increase in the proportion of people in 2000 who are “very” rather than “generally” satisfied with services provided by the City.

The average “very satisfied” percentage for all services evaluated in 1998 was 53%. The “very satisfied” percentage for the same services increased to 65% in 2000.

The relationship between the Council and Tempe residents continues to be positive.

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of all residents are either very (26%) or generally (61%) satisfied with the job the Council is doing. The percentage of negative evaluations increased from 7% in 1998 to 13% in 2000. The percentage of residents who believe they can present their views to the Council if they desire and the percentage of those who believe the Council will give their concerns serious consideration, are down slightly from 1998 but remain high. In 1998, 90% of those interviewed felt they could present their views to the Council and 75% said they felt their views would be given serious consideration. The comparable figures for 2000 are 86% and 72%.

As was the case in 1998, evaluations of the competence and courteousness of City Council members and Tempe staff remain high.

The way Tempe communicates with residents appears to be open and responsive.

A majority, 53%, say they have watch public broadcast Channel 11 in the past 12 months, about one-fourth (26%) have signed on to the City’s Web Page, and 65% of all residents say they have seen Tempe Today at least once

Where people live in Tempe has very little impact on how the City is evaluated.

A comparison of people living north and south of Southern showed only two questions were answered differently. People living north of Southern were more likely to be dissatisfied with how tax money is being spent (28%) compared to people living in the southern part of the City (17%). In addition, residents living in the north part Tempe were more likely than those in the south to indicate they had contacted a City employee in the past year – 29% to 18%.

In response to Council's request to try to be more specific about where the City can improve on the job the City is doing serving the residents of Tempe, residents were asked an open-ended giving people and opportunity to "send a message" to the Council. While all responses as presented in the survey report, the most important messages were: (1) resolve and move on regarding the Boy Scout issue; (2) do more to handle traffic in Tempe; (3) hire and train more police officers so they become more of a presence in the community; (4) improve the bus system and move toward light rail; (5) listen more often and closely to citizen input; (6) do what you can to improve education in Tempe; (7) keep alleys and streets cleaner; (8) opinions about Rio Salado are about 50% positive and 50% negative; (9) help street people; and (10) complete freeways (particularly the 101) and roads in the area which will help reduce traffic.

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling for Dr. Bruce Merrill, an ASU professor who is doing a survey to determine how you feel about living in Tempe. Your name has been randomly selected and your responses will be completely confidential. Your input will help city officials do a better job serving the citizens of Tempe. Will you answer a few questions for us please? Are you the (male/female) head of the household? IF NO: Is there male or female head there? IF NO: Is there a time I could call back to talk to them? IF NO: end interview!

1. What do you feel is the single most important problem or issue facing the City of Tempe that the City Council should be trying to do something about? ASK OPEN-ENDED AND CODE BELOW -

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. Traffic, need for roads, freeways	21%	21%
2. Crime, violence, theft, more police, gangs, drug	16	8
3. Education related: funding, better schools, teachers, etc	9	8
4. Growth related: planning, zoning, etc	8	11
5. Need for more or better mass transit	4	4
6. Help street people, poor, homeless, shelters	4	3
7. High taxes	3	3
8. Environmental concerns: air, water, noise pollution	2	2
9. More youth programs	1	*
10. Too many apartments, run down apartments	1	*
11. Rio Salado: positive comments, support	*	4
12. Rio Salado: negative	*	3
13. Problems with mayor, recall mayor	*	4
14. Clean yards, trash, alleys, etc	1	1
13. Mayor and council need to work together	*	1
14. Big companies replacing mom and pops downtown	*	1
15. Better coordination between council and staff	*	1
16. Other mentions less than one percent	2	5
17. No problem mentioned	<u>27</u>	<u>20</u>
	100%	100%

(*) less than one percent of all citizens

2000 survey "other" comments. Numbers in parentheses are the number of mentions: finish downtown (4); maintain our quality of life (4); don't need a stadium in Tempe (3); improve the older, rundown areas (3); need more for youth to do (3); ASU students too loud or too many in a household (3); stop the recall of the mayor (2); more diverse, affordable housing downtown (2); stop discrimination against City employees (2); too much spending (2); the new power plant; get rid of the pigeons (1); airplane noise (1); freeway proposals (1); more street lights (1); parking downtown (1); gays should be more tolerant of non-gays (1); against the United Way (1); get more work out of City employees (1).

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the services offered to you by the City of Tempe (read 1-4)

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very satisfied	37%	52%
2.generally satisfied	58	43
3.somewhat dissatisfied	4	3
4.very dissatisfied	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100%	100%

2. IF DISSATISFIED: Why are you dissatisfied?

I had a house burn and asked the police to watch the house. They let it burn.
I called my councilman more than once and never got a response.
Property taxes have gone up 25% - recall the council and mayor.
Small mom and pops operations are being forced out of downtown.
A lot of things are not run efficiently.
City used to be nice and now it isn't.
Because of what's happening on Mill Ave.
City charges more for services than other cities.
Great except for police department.
Can't get high speed internet access until 2002.
Don't like spending money on Rio Salado.
Hard to get police to handle college related problems.
Need to "beef up" the police.
Tempe Town Lake will wash away someday.
Services have declined the past five years.
There are too many cars.
They don't clean the alley behind my house.
It takes them too long to work on roads.

Q's 4 – 12: Has anyone in your household used any of these city services, programs, or facilities in the past 12 months? IF YES: Were you very satisfied, generally satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

	<u>very sat</u>	<u>gen. sat</u>	<u>somewhat dissatisfied</u>	<u>very dissat.</u>	<u>percent used</u>
2000 weekly trash pickup	71%	26	2	1	96
1998	55%	43	2	*	96
2000 recycling program	69%	25	4	2	88
1998	46%	48	4	2	89
2000 Tempe libraries	78%	20	2	*	75
1998	65%	34	1	*	84
2000 Tempe parks	69%	26	4	1	76
1998	49%	48	3	*	70
2000 recreational programs	67%	28	4	1	43
1998	49%	47	4	*	41
2000 police services	52%	36	8	4	37
1998	48%	38	9	5	41
2000 bus service	40%	35	15	10	30
1998	22%	40	19	19	21
2000 paramedic services	79%	20	1	0	31
1998	75%	23	1	1	13
2000 fire department services	81%	18	*	1	33
1998	73%	23	4	0	9
2000 senior citizen services	68%	27	3	2	25
1998	54%	42	4	0	11
2000 after school programs	59%	37	2	2	16
1998	47%	53	0	0	8
2000 counseling or job placement	56%	30	10	4	6
1998	48%	36	10	6	5

(*) Less than 1 percent

13. How satisfied are you with the way the City spends your tax dollars?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very satisfied	13%	22%
2.generally satisfied	67	58
3.somewhat dissatisfied	18	16
4.very dissatisfied	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
	100%	100%
Percent with no opinion	9	6

14. IF DISSASTISIED: Could you give me an example of where your tax dollars were not spent wisely?

	<u># mentions</u>	<u>% residents</u>	
Rio Salado	40	7	(7)
Downtown redevelopment	15	2	(1)
Mass transit	9	1	(2)
Freeways and road construction	8	1	(*)
Education	7	1	(0)
Gay pride, Boy Scout situation	4	*	
Downtown parties	2	*	
Stadium	1	*	
Cut City work staff	1	*	
Photo radar	1	*	
Speed bumps	1	*	
Transients	1	*	
Trash and recycling	1	*	

(*) less than one percent.

(**) The numbers in parentheses are percent of all residents giving the same response in 1998

15. How safe do you feel walking in the downtown area at night. Do you feel –

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very safe	8%	12%	27%
2.safe	55	55	55
3.unsafe or	31	25	12
4.very unsafe	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>
	100%	100%	100%

16. How safe do you feel walking in your neighborhood at night –

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very safe	12%	19%	50%
2.safe	56	49	38
3.unsafe or	26	26	9
4.very unsafe	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
	100%	100%	100%

17. And how safe do you feel walking in your neighborhood during the day –

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very safe	39%	54%	76%
2.safe	56	43	23
3.unsafe or	4	2	1
4.very unsafe	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
	100%	100%	100%

*less than one percent

18. Have you contacted the Mayor or any Council member over the past 12 months?

IF YES: How did you contact them?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
telephone	7%	9%
E-mail	2	5
in-person	4	6
mail	1	1
no contact	<u>86</u>	<u>79</u>
	100%	100%

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
19. Was the person you dealt with helpful? (% yes)	82	89
20. Was the person you dealt with courteous (% yes)	94	96

21. Have you contacted an employee at the Tempe City Hall in the past 12 months?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
Percent yes	27	22
Percent person was helpful	88	88
Percent person was courteous	94	92

22. If you felt you wanted to have input on an issue that affects you and your neighborhood, do you feel you have the opportunity to present your views to the Mayor and Council?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
Percent yes	90	86

23. If you did present your views to the Mayor and Council, do you think your concerns would be given serious consideration?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
Percent yes	75	72

24. Are there areas or services where it seems to you the City of Tempe is spending more money than they need to?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
Percent yes	28	33

25. IF YES ABOVE: Where are they spending too much?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. Rio Salado	12	11
2. Downtown redevelopment	3	8
3. Sports, traffic management, Cardinals	1	2
4. The bus system, mass transit	1	3
5. Landscaping/beautification	1	1
6. Public art/bus stops	1	1
7. Roads/streets/freeways	1	1
8. Other	3	3

*Entries are percent of all residents

26. Are there areas or services where you it seems to you the City of Tempe should be spending more money than they are?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
Percent yes	50	51

27. IF YES ABOVE: In what areas or services would you like to see more money spent?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. police/crime/gangs/drugs	12	9
2. education/schools/funding	8	10
3. traffic congestion/enforcement	6	4
4. more or better bus service	3	4
5. roads/streets/maintenance	3	4
6. clean up alleys/yards	3	3
7. more parks/recreation	3	1
8. funding for fire department	2	*
9. youth programs	1	2
10. more street lighting	1	*
11. more for senior citizens	1	*
12. more for homeless, street people	1	2
13. Rio Salado	*	1
14. libraries	*	1
15. redevelopment	*	1
16. bike lanes	*	*

(*) less than one percent

28. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of life you have living in the City of Tempe-

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very satisfied	63%	60%	72%
2.generally satisfied	34	37	25
3.dissatisfied	3	3	3
4.very dissatisfied	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>*</u>
	100%	100%	100%

29. Overall, how satisfied are you with the job the Tempe City Council is doing? Are you:

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.very satisfied	13%	17%	26%
2.generally satisfied	78	76	61
3.dissatisfied	7	7	10
4.very dissatisfied	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
	100%	100%	100%

30. In the last 12 months, have you watched Channel 11 the public service broadcast channel that televises information about the City of Tempe? IF WATCHED: About how many times have you watched Channel 11 in the last 12 months?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. never watched	53%	53%
2. one or two time	13	10
3. three or four times	8	8
4. five or six times	7	7
5. seven or eight times	1	2
6. over eight times	<u>18</u>	<u>20</u>
	100%	100%

31. In the past 12 months, have you accessed the City's Internet page? IF YES – about how many times have you used the City's Internet page?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. not accessed	80%	74%
2. one or two times	7	11
3. three or four times	3	5
4. five or more times	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
	100%	100%

32. In the past twelve months, about how many times have you read the Tempe Today Newsletter?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
Not read or accessed	31%	35%
One or two times	4	8
Three or four times	4	6
Five or six times	4	6
Seven or more times	<u>58</u>	<u>45</u>
	100%	100%

DEMOGRAPHICS

33. How many years have you lived in Tempe? (read 1-3)

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. five years or less	17%	18%
2. six to fifteen years	31	27
3. over 15 years	<u>52</u>	<u>55</u>
	100%	100%

34. Do you own or rent your home?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.own	84%	84%
2.rent	<u>16</u>	<u>16</u>
	100%	100%

35. Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home?

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.yes	30%	24%

36. Which of these categories includes your age (read 1-3)

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. under 35	22%	20%
2. 35 to 54	40%	40
3. 55 or older	38	40

37. Do you live:

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. north of Southern	39%	40%
2. south of Southern	<u>61</u>	<u>60</u>
	100%	100%

38. Does the female head of your household work (read 1-3)

	<u>2000*</u>
15. full time	34%
2. part time	10
3. not employed	45
4. no female head	<u>11</u>
	100%

(*) not asked in 1998

39. Does the male head of your household work (read 1-3)

	<u>2000</u>
1. full time	56%
2. part time	7
3. not employed	28
4. no male head	<u>10</u>
	100%

40. Please tell me which of these intervals includes your total family income (read 1-3)

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1. under \$35,000	33%	27%
2.\$36,000 - \$55,000	29	29
3. Over \$55,000	<u>38</u>	<u>44</u>
	100%	100%

41. sex:

	<u>1998</u>	<u>2000</u>
1.male	47%	48%
2.female	<u>53</u>	<u>52</u>
	100%	100%

42. Finally, are there any areas you would like us to report back to the Mayor and City Council where you would like to see the City of Tempe improve services or do a better job serving the people who live in Tempe?

mentions comment

Boy Scout controversy

10	Mayor and Council need to bring closure to Boy Scout issue, work
7	Mayor should resign, be recalled
5	Mayor handled Boy Scout issue poorly
4	Mayor shouldn't give personal views for the City
7	Against recall or the way Mayor is being treated
8	Fund Boy Scouts, United Way
5	Mayor and Council handled Boy Scout situation poorly
1	Stop funding organizations that discriminate
(47)	Total number of mentions (8% of all residents)

Traffic control

19	Do more to control traffic
5	Use more speed bumps, put speed bumps on Pegasus, Del Mar, Balboa
2	Get rid of speed bumps
(26)	Total number of mentions (4% of all residents)

Police

(20)	Need for more police presence, training, support, tougher on juveniles (3% of all residents)
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Mass Transit

15	Improve <u>mass transit</u> , better bus service, get light rail
1	Buses are always empty, waste of money
(16)	(3% of all residents)
15	<u>Mayor and Council</u> should listen more, be more open with public (2% of all residents)
14	Improve <u>education</u> , higher pay, smaller classes, better funding (2% of all residents)
11	Keep <u>alleys and streets</u> cleaner (2% of all residents)

Rio Salado

- 7 Get Rio Salado funded, finished, use private development, need more information about what is going on there
 - 3 against Rio Salado, waste, will wash away
 - 1 Need a boat ramp at Rio Salado I can afford
- (11)

Homeless, street people

- 8 Need to help homeless, street people, need shelter downtown
 - 1 Get rid of street people
- (9) (1.5% of all residents)
- 9 Complete freeways, finish 101, widen freeways, need lights on Del Rio
- (1.5% of all residents)

Cardinal Stadium

- 4 Do more to get Cardinal Stadium
 - 4 Do less to get Cardinal Stadium
- (8) (1% of all residents)
- 6 Preserve or protect Tempe Butte from development (1% of all residents)
 - 5 Improve Pyle Center, do more for seniors, more classes at Pyle
- (less than 1% of all residents)
- 5 Need a grocery store downtown
 - 4 Need more parking down town
 - 4 Improve or preserve neighborhoods, downtown
 - 4 Stop subsidizing restaurants and businesses downtown
 - 3 Spend City money more economically
 - 3 Keep taxes as low as possible

- 2 Reduce noise from airplanes
- 2 control of weeds, but bushes on Watson & Rural block vision
- 2 Expand recycling program
- 2 Be stricter with kids
- 2 Utility, water bills are too high
- 2 Take down political signs
- 2 Improve hazardous waste program
- 2 Improve the quality of the drinking water
- 2 Finish downtown, help develop Hayden Mill

Single mentions:

Reduce bias toward City employees
 Enforce codes to get old cars out of yards
 Bring back the mobile libraries
 Stop cars from parking on side walks
 I'm concerned about a halfway house in my neighborhood
 Enforce bicycle laws
 Police dog owners
 Don't cut down anymore mature trees
 Repeal sidewalk sitting law
 Eliminate parking downtown
 Enforce handicapped parking laws
 Stop developing freeways
 Stop going after landlords so much
 Do more to reduce pollution
 Fund Dahmer Park
 Clean up the Police Department problem
 Use desert landscaping more often
 I'm against the big brick building going up downtown
 Don't like to see people sitting on Mill Ave.
 Preserve open spaces
 Stop City employees from doing unnecessary work
 Stop giving free golf to City Council members
 Do something about rowdy students
 Make people take better care of rental properties
 Stop the SRP power station
 The building department is hard to work with
 There is too much immigration
 There is a need for more books in the libraries
 Pigeons need to be taken care of
 Police are not competent
 Tempe should be a no smoking city

A sanitation supervisor was very rude
We support the City requiring contractors to provide insurance
City needs to stand up to ADOT
Keep the lake clean
Widen Highway 60
Work on sewers too much
There is a problem with Tempe and the university